

THE THEORY OF LINGUISTIC DEFICIT WITHIN THE CLASH OF DIFFERENT MENTALITIES AND CULTURES (SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH OF PERSONAL NAMES IN ALBANIAN)

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Abstract: This paper combines some Albanian scholars' findings regarding Albanian personal names with some empirical data taken from questionnaires filled out by adult respondents (aged 18–23), who were part of a survey conducted at the University of Durrës (Faculty of Education). My research was carried out with the help of inductive methods, which although sometimes fail to offer any scientific certainty, allow for generalisation to be made, provided direct and clear examples are brought. Thus, after a review of the studies written by Palok Daka, several subdivisions of personal names were distinguished (e.g. personal names of local origin, foreign origin, and so on). The names were analysed from a sociolinguistic perspective, with reference to the theory of linguistic deficit, which in the case of Albanian is linked, to a significant extent, to cultural deficit.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, onomastics, personal names, clash of mindsets and mentalities.

Initially, in order to update the knowledge about the present situation of Albanian personal names, the present paper turns to some studies made by various Albanian scholars on this topic, and combines their observations with some results obtained in a survey in which the interviewees were adults aged 18–23. Due to space limitations, the importance of personal names in preceding stages of life (infancy, childhood, adolescence) was not treated on this occasion, as this aspect needs to be studied more carefully in a separate paper.

Personal names form a special class of words (Kurylovicz 1962, quoted in Lloshi 1969: 165). Names cannot have a primary meaning and an orderly semantic development as other words do (Nadel 1955: 153, 166). A name becomes an indicator, a neutral sign, which only shows and distinguishes a relevant person, but does not have a specific meaning content (Huismann 1961: 362).

In the lexicon of a language, names are separated from other words and cannot be included in a common comprehensive dictionary, *because proper nouns need no explanation* (Çiçagov 1959: 8, quoted in Lloshi, *ibidem*). Changes of proper nouns are different from those of ordinary words. An ordinary word cannot undergo a change that breaks the

union between form and the content, whereas the transition from *Victoria* to *Vito*, from *Qeramudin* in *Qamo*, *Agron* in *Goni* does not pose any risks.

Some reviews of personal names in Albanian claim that the history of personal names is an integral part of the culture and history of the language spoken by the people (Daka 1981: 105 and Shpuza 1998: 147 et al.). Consequently, the issue of personal names is seen almost by all scholars as a national issue. Of course, these researchers are right, as besides the best support for the thesis of ethnic continuity of the Albanians offered by toponymy, important evidence was also provided (and continues to be provided) by anthroponomy (Daka 1984: 139).

From this point of view, I think that the best way is to study **personal names of local origin**.

Based on the review of the studies of Palok Daka, who has done some significant work in this field, personal names can be organised into two large groups. (Daka 1981, no. 1.):

I. The first group includes all personal names that have local sources (Illyrian, Illyrian-Albanian and Albanian), such as: *Bardh-i/ Bardh-a* (White) (*Bardhosh, Bardhush, Bardhuk, Bardhok, Bardhim, Bardhel, Bardhec, Bardhan* etc.); *Ujk-u/ ulk-u* (Wolf) (*Ujkan, Ulk, Ukë, ukash, Ukashin, Ukshin*); *Miri* (Good) (*Miran, Miran, Mirak, Mirash, Mirosh, Miruk, Mirush* etc.); *Vogël* (Small) (*Voc, Vocërr, Vok, Vokërr, Voksh*, etc.); *Gjel* (Rooster) (*Gjelan, Gjelok, Gjelosh, Gjeluc, Gjelush*, etc.); *Lul* (Flower) (*Lulan, Lulash, Lulin* etc.); *Gur* (Stone) (*Guran, Gurec, Gurash, Gurosh* etc.) etc. (Daka 1984).

This group also includes:

Personal names that are derived directly from the abstract or concrete vocabulary from different fields (Daka 1970):

It should be noted that this classification is made by the aforementioned researcher, about which some observations could be made. However, no scientific interventions were made in this respect and on this occasion, with the exception of some explanations that were provided on some points.

a. Personal names related to flora: *Bajame* (Almond), *Borzilok* (Basil), *Burbuqe*, *Dafinë* (Laurel), *Fidan* (Seedlings), *Karafil* (Carnation), *Manushaqe* (Violet), *Mimosa* (Mimosa) etc.

b. Personal names related to fauna: *Bilbil* (Whistle), *Dallëndyshe* (Swallow), *Dash* (Ram), *Flutur* (Butterfly), *Gjeraqinë* (Hawk), *Petrit*, *Skifter* (Falcon), *Shpendi* (Bird) etc.

c. Personal names derived from concrete nouns in different fields: *Argjend* (Silver), *Bjeshkë* (Mountain), *Borë* (Snow), *Dhuratë* (Gift), *Flamur* (Flag), *Kadife* (Velvet), *Kalem* (Pencil), *Stoli* (Bench), *Sheqere* (Sugar) etc.

d. Personal names derived from geographical nouns: *Adriatik*, *Bushat*, *Drin*, *Delvinë*, *Gramoz*, *Kelmend*, *Moravë*, *Sazan*, *Shkëlzen*, *Tomor*, *Valbonë* etc.

e. Personal names derived from capita: *Durrsak*, *Matjan* etc.

f. Personal names derived from abstract nouns: *Dëshirë* (Desire), *Jetë* (Life), *Meritë* (Merit), *Shpresë* (Hope) etc.

g. Personal names derived from the field of terminology: *Arsim-i* (Education), *Kongres-i* (Congress), *Ideal-i* (Ideal), *Histori-a* (History), *Triumf-i* (Triumph) etc.

If one remembers the years of dictatorship, one needs to bear in mind that this historic milestone in Albania was engrained in the local mentality, culture and lifestyle. Moreover,

dictatorship in Albania was different than in other countries. We proclaimed ourselves an atheist nation and loved communism, and also the dictator's confidence limits exceeded. Thus, some Marxist-Leninists terms were part of life: they were not only used but felt.

This explains the fact that point **I.g.** connects the names that belong to various terminologies according to some individual fields that were deeply affected by the dictatorship, thereby providing a clear reading of that famous phrase that accompanied men, women and children during those years, "regardless of religion and a province, one for all and all for one" in the daily miserable work.

h. Personal names derived from calendar nouns: *Janare-ja* (January), *Mars-i* (March), *Mërkur-i* (Wednesday), *Nëntor-i* (November) etc.

i. Personal names derived from derivative nouns: *Adhurimi* (Worship), *Afrim-i* (Approach), *Agime* (Sunrise), *Bashkim* (Union), *Bukuria* (Beauty), *Dëfrim-i* (Entertainment), *Dituri-a* (Knowledge), *Durim-i* (Endurance), *Festim-i* (Celebration), *Fitim-i* (Profit), *Fluturimi* (Flight), *Gëzimi* (Joy) etc.

One needs to clarify that the issue was initially with some verbal names (names formed from verbs); most of these led to the formation of generic names (usable in everyday life) from which personal names were derived (*adhuroj* > *adhurim* > *Adhurimi* (worship); *afroj* > *afrim* > *Afrimi* (approach) etc.)

The boundary that separates personal nouns from general nouns is not closed. Crossings occur frequently from one group to another. Many personal nouns or names of countries have emerged from generic nouns (Agalliu, Angoni, Demiraj etc., 2002: 84), as is the case in several instances. At the same time, the opposite can happen: many proper names of people or places become generic names, such as the words *lek* (Albanian currency) < *Lekë* (King of Albania), *napoleon* < *Napoleon*, *ampere* < *Amperes*, *herc* < *Hertz*, *omm* < *Ohm*, *ciceron* < *Ciceron* etc.

j. Personal names derived from *denominal* adjectives: *Bestar*, *Besim*, *Besnik*, *Fisnik*, *Emirë*, *Edlirë* etc.

k. Names derived directly from verbs: *Afroni*, *Lulëzoni*, *Fillon-i*, *Jeton-i*, *Ndrit-i* etc.

l. Names derived from compound and non-derivative words: *Dashamir*, *Fatbardh*, *Fatlum*, *Fatmir*/ *Fatmira*, *Gojarti*/ *Gojarta*, *Kushtrimi*/ *Kushtrimeja* etc.

There are some personal names that Daka classifies according to their word formation manner:

a. Personal names created by means of suffixation: *Boran*, *Dritan*, *Hekuran*, *Lirak*, *Lulash*, *Sokolesh*, *Fitori* etc.

b. Personal names created by means of composition such as: *Arjetë*, (gold+life/ ar + i jetës), *Ermal* (wind+mountain/ er+ e malit), *Orjetë* (fairy+life/ ora, zana e jetës), *Besëmir* (trust+good/ besë + e mirë), *Arlindë* (lindi si ar/ was born like gold), *Erlindë* (lindi si erë/ was born like the wind), *Emirjonë* (good+our/ e mirë+e jonë), *Çeljetë* (bloom+life/ çel + jeta) etc.

II. The second class includes all names of foreign origin, both secular names and those with religious connotations.

This group includes names from foreign sources: Greek, Roman, Slavic, Oriental (Araber-Turkish), Jewish, Italian, French, German, English, Spanish, Russian etc. (Daka 1981, no. 1).

Daka distinguishes in this group some layers:

- The first layer of foreign names (corresponding to the Greek colonisation in the seventh-sixth centuries BC, Illyrian land invasion from Rome).
- The second layer of foreign names (corresponding to the Byzantine-Slavic rule).
- The third layer of foreign names (in the fifteenth century, the oriental names Persian-Arab-Turkish). This is the biggest layer of names of foreign origin.

For the *first and second layer*, one has to mention some of the names according to the quoted author (Daka 1984:139):

– *Lekë* (abbreviated form the borrowed name *Aleksandër*, with international use. Differs from other abbreviated forms of this name: *Aleks*, *Leks*, *Aleko*, *Sandër*); *Gjon*, *Gjin dhe Gjun* (secondary) with shortened forms of *Gjokë*, *Gjikë*, dhe *Gjukë*. Genesis is related to the Hebrew *Jehohanan/ Jehonan*. In various languages in Europe, the name has taken various reflexes: Latin – *Johannes*, Greek – *Joanis*, German – *Johanne*, Italian – *Giovani*, English – *John*, French – *Jean*, Spanish – *Juan* etc. The names *Gjon* and *Gjin* entered our country via Christianity; *Shtjef/ën-i* (shortened name for *Tefë*), Latin pre-Slavic borrowed name: *Stephanus* – *Shtjefën*); *Engjëll / Ejëll-i* (Latin *Angelus*, Greek *Angèlos*, German *Angelus*, French *Angel*, Italian *Angelo* etc.); *Mëhill-i/ Mhill* (*Hilë*, *Hilush*, *Hiluk*, *Ndue/ Ndou/ Ndojë* (*Ndoc*, *Ndokë*); *Ndreu* (*Ndrekë*, *Ndrethi*); *Nikollë-a* (*Nikë*, *Kolë*, *Kolec*, *Lec* etc.); *Pal-i* (*Palokë*, *Paluçë*, *Palush*, *Lush* etc.); *Pjetër* (*Pjetrush*, *Petruk*, *Tuk*, *Pecë*, *Pepë* etc.). In both these layers, names from the Christian world (both Western and Eastern) are predominant.

Regarding the *third layer*, a thorough work should be done on these names. **Many authors mention this layer, but examples and analyses are lacking.**

Among others, we think that the lack of their appropriate study is linked to the issue of Albanian nationalism (so pointed among us). Since 1912, some of the key tasks of the “Renaissance” writers have been related to the literary language of the nation, which should be based on the spoken language of the people, where the Albanian language will be taught to read in a wide extent with a uniform alphabet, and drawn from the literary Albanian the foreign words etc.

From our surveys, we find that the personal names of four generations express more. This third layer continued to prevail all the time, even though it is kind of waning recently (in the 80s–90s), especially with the advent of democracy. Over the years, this trend continued to be replaced day by day with the national trend of using names mainly from native sources (Pelagian-Illyrian and Albanian) and, at the same time, with the inevitable flood of foreign personal names, as well as other trends, as a result of the openness of the post-dictatorship society.

Preferences regarding personal names that pertain to the aforementioned trends vary also depending on sociolinguistics variables such as age, sex, education, socio-economic class, status, etc. So, for example, native names have always been liked by a certain elite.

Daka asserted that the connotation of religious names in Shkodra during the monism was not used with the assent of the secular state... We are going to explain names with reference to the time in which this paper was written, respectively, during the monism.

Questionnaires were distributed at the Faculty of Education, University of Durrës, according to a subdivision in four generations of naming trends (first generation/young – students, second generation/middle-aged – parents, third generation/old – grandparents,

fourth generation/older – great-grandparents.) Due to the space restrictions of the study, the following examples were taken only from thirty questionnaires (out of one hundred).

Firstly, personal names can be classified according to the generation of bearers to which they pertain:

– **The first generation (young name bearers – students):**

Feminine names: *Fatmira* (Fortunate), *Elena*, *Esmeralda*, *Daniela*, *Fjorentina*, *Ersilda*, *Manjola* (Magnolia), *Amarilda*, *Erjola*, *Anisa*, *Dorjana*, *Denisa*, *Jasara* (Yasar), *Emanuida*, *Suada*, *Adela*, *Agrajta*, *Enxhi*, **Hamide**, *Fabjola*, *Eva*, *Elma*, *Anila*, *Anjeza*, *Tereza*, *Paola*, *Ervin*, *Danjela*.

Masculine names: *Kristjan*, *Dik*.

– **The second generation (middle-aged name bearers – parents):**

Feminine names: *Vjollca* (Violet), *Refie*, *Fidane* (Seedlings), *Ylmije*, *Lirie* (Freedom), *Jolanda*, *Mimoza*² (Mimosa), **Hatixhe**, *Vitore*, *Drita* (Light), *Dude*, *Xhemile*, *Shaze*, *Lavdiqe*, (Loyalty), *Saniqe*, *Naile*, *Ferizate*, *Mirela*, *Ajtanga*, *Majlinda*, *Naxhiqe*, *Shpresa*², *Nush*, *Arta*, *Dhurata* (Gift), *Resmije*, *Enita*, *Izabela*, *Valentina*², **Naile**.

Masculine names: *Osman*, *Astrit*, *Hekuran*², *Islam*², **Ramiz**², *Kajmak* (Cream), *Rruzhdit*, *Zef*, *Nazmi*, *Fadil*, *Sefer*, **Petrit**, *Besnik*, **Qazim**, *Agim* (Sunrise), *Luan* (Lion), *Ndriçim* (Lighting), *Durim* (Endurance), *Eduard*, *Bajram*, *Hajri*, **Rexhep**, *Sadi*, *Fatmir*, *Hatim*, *Sadik*, *Mikel*, *Illir*, *Kodhel*, *Kastriot*.

– **The third generation (old name bearers – grandparents):**

Feminine names: *Azbie*, *Zyhra*, *Shide*, *Azbie*, *Baftie*, *Vashe*, *Sheqere*², *Feride*, *Bihane*, *Nadire*, **Hatixhe**, *Marte*, **Hamide**², *Sabrie*, *Zylfije*, *Katerina*, *Hybe*, *Ismete*, *Kaje*, *Leme*, *Hajdiqe*, *Meriban*, *Isnire*, *Gjyle*, *Devije*, *Xhevate*, *Shyqyrie*, *Safete*, *Lule*, *Adile*, *Alife*, **Ikbale**, **Naile**, *Lije*, *Xhevahire*, *Nafije*, *Lumturije*, *Vajdë*, *Rukie*, *Emine*, *Klara*, *Anjeza*, *Niazi*, *Sulltane*, *Bibë*, *Mrika*, *Melie*, *Dile*, *Liza*, *Dila*.

Masculine names: *Kasem*, *Muhamed*, *Meço*, *Nefail*, *Mustafa*², **Qazim**², *Jakup*, *Halil*, *Muharrem*, *Xhevri*, **Ibrahim**, *Rustem*, *Pren*, *Sherif*, *Ded*, *Gjin*, *Dalip*, *Riza*, *Sulejman*⁴, *Ali*² *Sadik*, *Shaqir*, *Sami*, *Vasip*, *Mustafa*, *Xhaferr*, *Isuf*, *Haxhi*, *Qerim*, *Murat*, *Imer*, *Nush*, **Rexhep**, *Hajri*, **Xhemal**², **Petrit**, *Fiqiri*, *Fejzi*, **Selman**, **Ramiz**, *Jakup*, *Sadik*, *Dyl*, *Emil*, *Toni*, *Niazi*, *Bexhet*, *Brahim*, *Pjetër*.

– **The fourth generation (older name bearers – great-grandparents):**

Feminine names: *Selime*, **Ikbale**, *Hike*, *Fazile*, *Çaje*, *Tanë*, *Fatime*, *Serme*, *Mereme*, *Salushe*, *Leme*, *Drane*, *Zade*, *Gonxhe* (Bud), *Sybe*, *Xhumaje*, *Aldije*, *Korre*, *Aishe*, **Naile**, *Bedrie*, *Nuje*, *Ana*, *Vaje*, *Baftisha*, *Marte*.

Masculine names: *Shaban*, **Ibrahim**, *Tefik*, *Kasem*, *Avdi*, **Osman**, *Haxhi*, **Xhemal**, *Bajram*, *Baki*, *Dalip*, **Qazim**, *Maksud*, *Rustem*, *Rrahman*², **Selman**, *Perlat*, *Isuf*, *Muhamed*, *Zenel*, *Mustafa*, *Halit*, *Loni*, *Ismail*, *Ali*, *Mark*.

As the examples show, the same personal names can be found not only within one generation, but also across generations. This can be explained by the Albanian tradition of respecting the Albanian establishment of the names, according to which a child takes the name of the parent or the name of a deceased relative. Examples show that the tradition of male names is much more respected. I believe that this situation is related to the important status of the man in the family.

Based on this statement, the processing and classification of these names resulted in the following subdivisions:

– **Dominant Muslim personal names**

These names are observed mainly in the third and fourth generation. They rarely occur in the second generation and they are almost absent in the new generation. All the names below are filtered in our language through Turkish and we find their explanation in Arabic (for both languages, Albanian and Turkish). The reason for the use of these names was religious. Here are some examples:

Ali (Arabic name which means 'high', the fourth of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad); **Xhumaje** (Arab name, name of the day, Friday, which comes from the verb *xhemea* / *jexhmeu* 'to gather'); **Sadik** (kind, right person); **Suada** (*saide* / *jesadu*, which means 'the rejoicing'); **Rahman** (one of the names of God-Allah, the Merciful); **Adile** / **Adil** (fair), **Haxhi** (Hajj pilgrimage) **Alife** (Leader, Caliph, K = H Strong, literally means 'messenger'), **Qerim** (Kerim, generous / noble head first); **Ikbale** / **Ikbale** (accepted, comes from the verb *kabele* / *jekbelu* 'recognize'); **Imer** / **Ymer** (Ymer, life, comes from the verb *amera* / *juamiru*, which means 'to add, and multiply'); **Hamide** (thank you), **Ramiz** (Ramëz, which means 'symbol'); **Hajri** (goodness, kindness); **Rexhep** (calendar month name: Recep, **Shaban**, **Ramadan**) **Sadi** (saad, happy); **Mustafa** (the chosen, clean) **Xhevahir** (Xheuheratun, gem); **Fiqiri** (Feker / fekiru you, to think) Nure / Nur (Nur, light), **Lejla** (night), **Emine** (reliable); **Safete** (safa / jasfi, by being purified); **Xhemal** / **Xhemile** (beautiful) etc.

There are also examples of other names of this kind, even though there is a possibility that some of these names have been derived from Turkish names that have no connection with Arabic, but that is very rare in comparison with the rest of the names.

Sanije, Sulejman, Hajdije, Maksud, Rustem, Ferizade, Isnije/ Hysni, Shaqir, Meriban, Gjyle, Aldije, Aishe, Isuf, Naxhije, Bajram, Murat, Muhamed, Elma, Nafije, Fejzi, Zan (Ramazan), Bedrije, Halit, Anila, Resmije, Hatim, Vaide, Selman, Selma, Rukije, Emine, Sulltane, Niazi, Baftisha, Baftie, Vaje, Bexhed, Dile (Adile), Brahim (Ibrahim), Xhevat, Vasip, Shyqerie, Safete, Gonxhe, Xhaferr, Zenel, Osman, Azbie, Kasem, Zyhra, Selime, Refie, Nefail, Tefik, Fazile, Kasem, Hatixhe, Rruzhdie, Sabrie, Sherif, Islam, Kajmak, Sali, Bihane, Nadire, Muharrem, Mereme, Isa, Haxhi, Zyber, Ylmije/ Ilmije/ Ilmi, Feride, Jakup, Avdi, Fatime, Nazmi, Fadil, Sefer, Zade, Baki, Dalip, Shaze, Hybe, Ismet/ Ismete, Riza, Sybe (repeated names have not been written).

Researchers Hamiti & Qamili (2013) in the treatment of Orientalism in relation to Macedonian Albanians claim, among other things, that strong traces of oriental culture as regards the Albanians in Macedonia is expressed even in anthroponymy and toponymy. Besides several national personal names, Oriental names dominate. Almost 90% of the personal names of Macedonian Albanians have an oriental origin.

Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that if this survey were conducted only in Lezha, the result would be quite different. I believe that Catholic names would dominate there.

Based on the data gathered, we know to which different areas of Albania the students belong, even though the study is undertaken at "Aleksader Moisiu" University of Durrës. Surveys through which we have worked belong mainly to the following districts and areas:

Durrës (Shijak Manzë, Qerret, Sukth), Pukë, Lushnje, Kavajë, Mat (Krastë), Dibër (Zall-Dardhë), Pogradec (Homezh), Tiranë (Kombinat, Kamzë, Pezë), Maqedoni (Trebisht), Dibër, Skrapar, Tropojë, Kukës, Shkodër, Berat, Përmet, Fush- Krujë, Mal i Zi (Guci), Tepelenë, Librazhd, Peshkopi, Burrel, Kuçovë, Elbasan etc.

This study is based on inductive methods, which although sometimes fail to offer any scientific certainty, allow for generalisation to be made, provided direct and clear examples are brought. In the present case, given the aforementioned examples of oriental personal names, the reader is free to think about them and to analyse them.

I believe that the third layer identified by Daka and many other researchers must be supported with concrete examples, perhaps in a much deeper form than that. Whether we like to admit it or not, living together with Turks has greatly influenced religion, mentality, culture everywhere and an argument in this respect are personal names.

After years of dictatorship, the change of the systems and the advent of democracy determined the development of that part of the passive vocabulary of the language which was left in limbo after the collapse of mosques and churches, as Albania was declared a secular state. Nowadays, religion remains an important variable in which language is visibly interwoven with society. Thanks to such a variable, the influence of the community on the language system can be observed, and the lexical system is certainly the most affected. Believers are also distinguished ethnographically, as they use their own spoken language and are thereby able to identify those that pertain to their social group (Shkurtaj 2009).

Conformism or solidarity is evident in the way of using personal names. But, at the same time, the tendency nowadays is to give Islamic names taken directly from Arabic, which are similar to names filtered through Arabic languages, but they differ in shape. Children of Muslims today will bear names like *Omar*, *Erdi*, *Hedi*, *Belkisa*, *Elhaide*, *Asia*, *Enes*, *Firdeus*, *Esmā*, *Unejsa*, *Zejneb*, *Dijane*, *Selma*, *Sulejma* etc. That is to say *Omar* and not *Ymer* or *Imer*, *Èsma* rather than *Esmā*, *Zejneb* and not *Zenepe*, *Asia* and non *Hasije* etc. In addition, one needs to be aware that these names are selected according to the contemporary tastes and the trend of all Albanians in using personal names.

Using a very special religious terminology in this social group (we think that the same thing happens with all religions and the phenomenon of putting personal names, due to the attitude towards faith in their religion) is the typical example of cultural relativity of meaning, and not only shows how language shapes our ideas, but also how it is able to discipline our social life. It enables us not only to identify ourselves as members of a nation, but also of a layer, status, dialect, group, religion etc.

In the same number of surveys, one could notice some subdivisions that comprised a reduced number of personal names, such as:

- Personal names derived from the abstract and concrete lexicon of the Albanian language: *Hekuran*, *Serme*, *Sheqere* (Sugar), *Meço*, *Vashë* (Girl), *Drane*, *Lirie* (Freedom), *Drita* (Light), *Dude*, *Dudije*, *Lavdije*, *Agim* (Sunrise), *Ndriçim* (Lighting), *Diton*, *Shpresë* (Hope), *Arta* (Gold), *Dhuratë* (Gift), *Ambla*, *Lumturie* (Happiness), *Durim* (Patience).

- Personal names formed from words composed of absolute and compound words: *Rezart/Rezarta* (Ray+Gold), *Valmirë*, *Hanmir* (Eat+good), *Fatmira* (Luck+good), *Majlinda* (Born in May), *Fatmir*, *Jamarbër*, *Lule* (Flower), *Vjollca* (Violet), *Fidane* (Seedlings), *Çaje*, *Amarilda*, *Manjola*.

Regarding the gender of personal names, we can say that in Albanian, except for certain names used only for men (*Dedë, Mark, Kastriot, Astrit, Petrit* etc.) or others that are used only for women (*Mimoza, Lule, Eva, Klara*), there are some names that have pairs for both sexes, such as *Fatmir* and *Fatmira*, *Fatbardh* and *Fatbardha*, *Amarildo* and *Amarilda* etc.

Moreover, the gender of anthroponyms and especially of patronymics does not depend on the meaning of the patronymic or the “sex of the persons in question, but on the gender of the words” (Martinet 1983: 169, my translation).

Personal names are different from generic names from some categories of grammar. Thus, for example, personal names have the same form (despite violations) as general names (*Fatmir- Fatmir-i; Fatmirë- Fatmir-a*), but, as we already know, they are self-sufficient, they do not have numbers (are usually used only in the singular) etc.

This is a topic of great interest in sociolinguistics, especially so as to see how these grammar rules are applied to personal nouns, as in Albania there is a huge problem in terms of literary standard violations in connection with personal names (Bidollari 2013: 523). However, this study cannot shed much light on the matter.

To proceed with the classification, the following groups of names can be delineated:

- Personal names related to flora and fauna: *Mimoza* (Mimosa), *Gonxhe* (Bud), *Korre, Melie, Petrit, Bibë* (Duckling), *Bibie, Luan* (Lion), *Flutura* (Butterfly).

- Personal names derived from the names the days of the week: *Pren/Prena* (Friday), *Marte* (Tuesday), *Dila* (Sunday).

- Some early names, which are derived from the Albanian language fund: *Dedë, Gjin, Ilir, Mark, Kastriot*.

- Catholic personal names: *Kristjan, Vitore, Zef, Marte, Jolanda, Eva, Anjeza, Tereza, Izabela, Mikel, Klara, Emil, Ana, Paola, Valentina, Mrika, Danjela, Pjetër*.

The name *Marte* (*E marte* – Tuesday) in Albanian has got several explanations. This name may be given precisely because the child is born on Tuesday. In the present case, it was recorded under the Catholic group of names, because I think that this name is also associated with the Catholic religion just as all the other names of the survey are Catholic.

- Names from folklore and mythology: *Halil, Tanë* (Albanian folklore names), *Elena* (Greek mythological name).

- Foreign personal names of various origins: *Esmeralda, Adela, Fjorentina, Denisa, Mirela, Miranda, Enxhi, Eduart, Fabjola, Enita, Anita, Liza, Dorjana, Fjoralba*.

The names of this group are mixed: some are of Christian origin, pertaining to several different European or non-European contexts. Such a variety of names explain the manner and mentality of Albanians in giving personal names, in accordance with the historical course of events. To understand this, I will present below a chronological overview of the deployment of these names in Albania.

Sometimes, a name may have several interpretations, such as *Dik*, for instance, which can be interpreted in two ways: the name may be a shortening of the name *Sadik* (kind, right person), but also the name of a character, Dick Shelton, which appeals to many Albanian people as a result of poverty and lack of information about foreign cinema. I think the latter might as well be considered the name of the new generation.

At the same time, there are some names whose meaning is obscure: *Ajtanga, Denada*.

From a more detailed analysis of the above statement, we believe that it is appropriate to mention another phenomenon that stands out, such as the issue of patronymics derived from personal names (Boissin 1962; Shpuza 1998).

While personal names are often used as surnames, sometimes the same name can occur in both positions simultaneously. The findings of the present research include *Mark Marku, Abdurahman Abdurahmani, Abdulla Abdullai* etc.

– The examples recorded contain some personal names in the form of aliases: *Fundime* (conclusion), *Hike* (Go), *Lije* (Smallpox), *Mbaresha* (Endings).

Even though this phenomenon is gradually disappearing, it seems to be developing again. Such a phenomenon is also treated by Shkurtaj from a sociolinguistic perspective, with reference to ugly names that display a negative semantic. Some examples of this kind can be found in this group as well: *Mjaftime* (Enough), *Mbarime* (Finish), *Varrime* (Funeral), *Sose*, *Pseerdhe* (Why did you come), *Viktimë* (Victim), *Pike*, *Zehere*, *Helme* (Poison) (Shkurtaj 1999: 81; Lloshi 1969: 170, Dhaka 1969).

– As one can see from the examples of repeated names that occur throughout the four generations, the phenomenon of giving the name of the grandmother/grandfather or great-grandfather, but also of a young person who has passed away, was widespread among the Albanians. However, it is becoming obsolete.

Based on the examples that exist nowadays, one can find in personal names some dialectal differences as *Imer – Ymer* (Shkurtaj 1999: 78; Lloshi 1969; Boissin 1962).

Recent instances of using personal names are sometimes of interest in the field of linguistic bias, especially in relation to children. Such cases are examples of deliberate linguistic prejudice. Children who are subject to this bias, alongside their peers, pay tribute to others who enjoy the privilege of a beautiful, fashionable name. Of course, there is a lot to be said, but it cannot be done on this occasion.

– From a sociolinguistic perspective, the feature that is the most attractive as regards personal names is the abbreviated form of a name.

According to Lloshi (1969: 167), we distinguish two kinds of forms in names: the first (the complete form) which is used for official purposes and the second which carries emotional-expressive backgrounds and evaluation as: abbreviations, germination, ambivalence, derivation with diminutive suffixes and suffixes expressing endearment etc.

As for the second trait, the author further delineates two major types:

A Forms: which undergo a historic process, and can serve really as input for phonetic studies, which may help in sounds history and phenomena of Albanian language that may be subject to epistemology (*Maria – Mri*). Thus, *Maria* is transformed into *Mri* thanks to the development of Albanian phonetics.

B Forms, which include a real abbreviation, certain style, expressive emotional burden as: *Vladimir-Ladi* (Lloshi 1969: 167). Certainly, this researcher sees personal names in stylistic terms.

Shkurtaj treats this widespread feature in sociolinguistic terms; he says: “It is time to go back to some aspects which clearly reveal the influences of cultural or social pressure in the language. (...) A fertile field that provides sociolinguistic views of valuable substance related to personal names refers to names of kinship, which are so numerous and diversified in Albanian ethnic lands (...), such as the second types of traits of personal names, which

are motivated by endearment or pampering reasons, or social factors” (Shkurtaj 2001: 121–128).

Given the two varieties of B forms (according to Lloshi), we note some other phenomena of Albanian personal naming:

- Specifically, we must discriminate between the abbreviated names that a child receives at birth (hence along with the establishment of the first official name) and abbreviations derived during the lifetime due to different reasons. For example, from the early decision of naming a child *Edlira* is followed by the decision of the parents and relatives that her abbreviated name would be *Lira* or *Eda* (so at birth), or the opposite: the child’s name will not be abbreviated, but it will be used only in the long form (*Edlira*). These are subjective but realistic decisions.

- The other type of abbreviations includes forms that are derived during one’s lifetime. Remember that this phenomenon of personal names is widespread in the world. The contact of Albanian language with other languages in the world and particularly with European languages, as it is noted recently, result in a kind of interference of these languages in today’s Albanian language. Nowadays, for example, from the contact of Albanian with Italian language subject to the host model community, there is a trend especially among immigrants to shorten the names: *Irena* – *Ire*, *Flavio* – *Fla* (Italy) etc.

- Variation is the engine of language evolution (Berruto 1994) and, therefore, the names of people with all the features which distinguish them separately as a class are part of the language, they cannot be separated completely and stand out the system impact (Lloshi 1969). Any change in the life of society is a knock on the doors of the language (Shkurtaj 2003). Consequently, everything is reflected even in naming people. Today’s polls reach these conclusions, which rightly constitute an alarm signal about contemporary practices of personal name-giving, especially among the younger generations, in the context of the confrontation of different mentalities and mindsets in the country and abroad. Linguistic policy should also pay attention to this important aspect.

Finally, the paper presents a brief chronology of personal names and underlines the reasons for their use.

- As it was already stated, religious personal names have been used all the time, even though there is a break during monism. One needs to reinforce the idea that the names of this type are used even nowadays. This group of names is dominated by Islamic names.

After 1912, some new words have been created by means of Albanian word formation mechanisms, or on in a programmatic way (a work that had begun with Renaissance). In this period many personal names were created, which replaced the anthroponomic fund from the aforementioned languages. Threse names include *Agim* (Sunrise), *Bashkim* (Union), *Bekim* (Blessing), *Besnik* (Loyalty), *Bukuri* (Beauty), *Guxim* (Courage), *Krenar* (Pride), *Kujtim* (Memory), *Lavdim*, *Mendim* (Thoughts), *Pajtim* (Reconciliation), *Shpresim*, *Urim* (Congratulation), *Vegim* (Vision), *Vullnet* (Will) etc. (Shpuza 1998: 148).

In the same period, Daka distinguishes the names: *Agim* (Sunrise), *Bukuri* (Beauty), *Besnik* (Loyal), *Bujar* (Generous), *Pranverë* (Spring), *Fatos*, *Gëzim* (Joy), *Shkëlqim* (Brightness) etc. According to Daka, these names are mainly observed in civil strata. We do not share the same opinion with this author about names such as *Bekim* (Blessing) and *Bujar* (Generous), which despite being a part of the Albanian language, are also borrowings.

First, we think that the name *Bekim* (Blessing) has a religious origin, while the second name *Bujar* (Generous) is a Slavic borrowing (Çabej 1976: 353).

– In the early 30s, the political and cultural pressure of Italy significantly increased the presence of Italian names, such as *Aldo*, *Anita*, *Benito*, *Bruno*, *Domenika*, *Mario*, *Nikoleta*, *Nikolin* etc. In first half of the 40s, German anthroponyms appeared for the same reason: *Adolf*, *Gertruda*, *Valter*, *Manfred*, *Rudolf* etc.

– What happened to personal names in the years after liberation (1944)? According to Daka, with the exception of first names typical of this period (*Partizan*, *Çetë* (Bunch), *Proletar* (Proletarian), *Pezë*, *Çlirim* (Liberation) etc.), the national fund was enriched with new creations such as *Edlira*, *Ermir*, *Ermal*, *Blerta*, *Rrezar*, *Lindita*, *Majlinda*, *Valjeta*, *Valmira*, *Donjeta*, *Mirjeta* etc.

– Occasional discoveries of Albanian archaeology brought several dozen Illyrian names, such as *Artan*, *Altin*, *Enkelejda*, *Brikena* etc. (Daka 1981: 109), as well as *Ilir*, *Ilira*, *Ilirian*, *Neritan*, *Entela*, *Enkelejd*, *Arbana*, *Alban* etc. (Shkurtaj 2006).

I will not dwell longer on this point, because one should not overlook the fact that early Albanian diaspora and some archaic dialects (Arbëreshs, Arvanites, the Chams) can be very useful resources for one's research into personal names, even more so than documents written in Albanian. We are fully confident that, with reference to the former period, we can even learn about early personal names derived from native Pelasgian-Illyrian-Albanian patronymics.

– Shkurtaj states that during the 50s–60s, many foreign names were introduced, especially names of literary characters from world literature, such as *Natasha*, *Svetllana*, *Timoshenko*, *Artur*, *Hamlet*, *Pushkin*, *Kevin* etc. Shpuza order also names as *Budjon*, *Çapajev*, *Aleksej*, *Aljosh*, *Budimir*, *Dimitrov*, *Katja*, *Katjusha*, *Ludmila*, *Marika*, *Natasha*, *Sashenka*, *Tamara*, *Tanja* etc. (Shpuza 1998: 149).

– From 1967 and until the 90s, Albania was completely isolated from both East and West, and was against all foreign anthroponomy (Shpuza 1998: 149).

Switching systems after 90s resulted in a rapid explosion of tastes toward these names. Names of this period are: *Kevin* from *Kevin Costner*, *Denis* from *Denis Rousseau*, *Dajana*. However, that had nothing to do with our famous names: *Djana* / *Zana*, *Majkëll* (*Michael*), *Geri* (*Gary*), *Riki* (*Ricky*) etc. (Shkurtaj 2006: 50). We can go on with *Riçard* from *Richard Gere*, the name *Xhulia* (*Julia*) from the movie “Desperating Julia” or the famous actress *Julia Roberts* (this trend of setting personal names existed before as well) etc.

A widespread phenomenon among Albanians nowadays is the formation of the names by the union of constituent phonemes of the names of both parents. Thus, one comes across *Arvjo* (*Arben* + *Vjollca*), *Tisvara* (*Shpëtim*/*Timi* + *Suzana*), *Jueda* (*Julinda* + *Edward*). Unless one acknowledges as names the results of the violations of the rules regarding the introduction of foreign personal names or of spelling rules, such as *Lavdi*, *Rukije*, *Dorjana* etc., which were illustrated above, the formation of names without any meaning may be considered a problem in Albanian.

Of course, we cannot deny that the Albanian elite society nowadays selects Illyrian names. The most frequent names are those that are not used often (*Melisa*) or that are derived from the Albanian vocabulary, such as *Lura*, *Vesa*, *Kaltra* etc. This can be mainly observed in recent years. The return to the Albanian and Illyrian names shows that besides

all these foreign flows and collision of mentality, or conscious fracture, the trend to preserve Albanian national consciousness is also obvious.

This trend is firmly promoted by the Kosovo population. Shpuza says that although Kosovo Albanians have been in constant contact with Europe, they have a fair evaluation about this issue. However, I think that there is a problem: despite the fact that we have been an isolated country, we have often showed ingenuity and maturity, prominently displayed every day a kind of cultural deficit reflected in language, which is prominently manifested in the selection of names.

The role of extralinguistic factors is undisputed. However, social factors that constrain the dialects are not the same within every ethnicity. The selection of personal names in a community changes depending on the ethnic group and social life. For example, the reasons for the Cham ethnic cleansing in the form of a scattered Diaspora throughout Albania were mainly religious, but we can see that in the Cham community Muslim religious names dominate. The Arbëresh of Italy has a national patriotic motivation expressed through personal names etc. A similar reason explains Kosovo's resistance to foreign pressure, especially against the Serb minority, in terms of establishing personal names.

In Kosovo, we find names such as *Aulona, Berat, Endrit, Rozafa, Drin, Arbnora, Lekë, Rron* (Lives), *Jeta* (Life), *Milot, Drilon, Durim* (Patience), *Fatos, Fidan* (Seedlings), *Blerta, Vesa* (Dew), *Lumi* (River), *Jon, Erëza, Lirika* (Freedom), *Arbër, Besart* (Trust+Gold), *Shkëlqim, Arlind* (Gold+Born), *Lis, Guri* (Stone), *Andrra* (Dream), *Rubik, Diell* (Sun), *Bora* (Snow), *Hana* (Moon), *Ylli* (Star), *Yllka, Urtina, Fiton* (Win), *Bulza, Rrona, Jehona, Noli, Shqiprim, Arben* (these names are taken from a middle school class in Pristina).

In conclusion, one can say that a researcher of Albanian personal names should not overlook some issues:

1. A study in this field should truthfully reflect the chronology of personal names of Albanian origin, autochthony, historical and cultural development of the country's economy and the mentality of its century-old tradition.

2. In anthroponyms and patronymics, one can find convincing arguments to solve the problems associated with the history of the Albanian language that are still unsolved to this day.

3. A compelling work should be done by researchers of the Albanian language to respect the standard rules in giving personal names in the Albanian language.

And finally, as the last issue is not yet solved, I end this paper by stating my wish to see a steady increase in the use of **names of local origin**, while an alternative to this would be the choice of a **beautiful name**. Whatever the case, it is advisable and even indisputable that the name should be **meaningful**.

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